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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
FIFTY YEARS SINCE.

A L E C T U R E

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Young Men's Association of the City of Utica,

FEBRUARY 2, 1843.

BY EZEKIEL BACON.

Utica, N. Y.

R. W. ROBERTS, PRINTER, 53 GENESEE STREET.

1843.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FIFTY YEARS SINCE;

WITH GLANCES AT THE PRESENT ASPECTS, AND FUTURE PORTENTS
OF THE AGE AND THE TIMES.

A L E C T U R E

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Young Men's Association of the City of Utica,

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"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever."

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WHY PRINTED?

Having received no advice, and been troubled with no requests from any quarter touching the publication of the following performance, the author has not been placed in the perplexing dilemma in which “honest JOHN BUNYAN” tells his readers that he found himself, when, as he quaintly but sententiously says—

Some say—“print it John,”
Others say—“no;”
Some say—“it may do good,”
Others say—“not so.”

But availing himself of the hint of MILTON in his “AREOPAGITICA, or speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing,” that “a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet than a fool will do of Sacred Scripture;” and trusting that the former class will be found much to outnumber the latter in the small circle of his readers, the writer has taken the unsolicited liberty “upon his own hook” of committing this “idle pamphlet” to the ordeal of the press—in coming to which determination he was also aided and prompted by some special considerations.

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The curiosity incident both to youth and age, which holds many an engaged and patient listener to the rehearsal of a tale of “olden time” (a dull and “thrice told tale,” though it may be) has undoubtedly incited to many of the requests which have been made of the author for its perusal, as well by those who heard, as also by those who had not an opportunity to hear it, as it was delivered. The inconveniences attending that mode of coming to a knowledge of its contents, in its imperfect and interpolated manuscript shape, the very imperfect and unsatisfactory mode of its delivery, together with other considerations which, though not always avowed, have probably, much influence with small authors, has induced the writer of this to submit it for publication in this form, with this his apology for so doing.

It may be proper to add, that some emendations and additions have since been made to it. That it may be as favorably received, as it was patiently heard by his partial and intelligent audience, the writer has not the vanity to expect or to hope for.

L E C T U R E .

* * * * * "The truth is, that the past is not everything; nor the future everything; nor the present everything; the intellect of man is now neither in its infancy, nor in its decrepitude.—JUDGE STORY.

Conformable to the commendable usage of deeper and higher preachers from a more elevated rostrum, by way of indicating the general theme and bearings of their intended discourse, the speaker has adopted as his text a sentiment from the writings of a learned and distinguished jurist and scholar, who now and long has adorned by his wisdom and his eloquence the highest judicial tribunal of our country ; and very long may such steady and brilliant lights continue to adorn them ! But whether there will be found any more clear connection or relation than is sometimes recognized in other orators of another and a graver class between the text and the sermon, remains to be collected from the result. But be that result what it may we shall proceed, as best we can do, in our somewhat excursive ramblings over a broad and boundless field, in which one hardly knows where to start or when to stop ; leaving it pretty much to our intelligent hearers to sum up its various heads, and draw from them, if they can, a suitable and edifying improvement.

That "every generation grows wiser and wiser" is a proverb which it is pretty certain was not first promulgated by an *octo*—or even by a *sexa-genarian*. The aged are probably inclined pretty generally to think that it is a maxim entitled to very little respect ; *knowing*, as they feel that they do, that the young shoots which have started up around, and are already overtopping them with their luxuriant, aspiring and *saucy* branches, are but fools comparatively to the considerate wisdom and treasured experience of their fathers. That there has

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within the last half century been a decided falling off in that disinterested spirit of public patriotism, private probity, and some of the moral virtues which once prevailed with the generation which is passing away, cannot it be justly questioned. "Pity it be so; and more it is a pity." But it is not our present purpose to treat upon either the past state or the present aspects and future portents of such high matters as these :—

* * * * * "a humbler task be ours,
These deeper things we leave to mightier powers."

We do but essay as it were to skim the surface of much shoaler and less afflicted waters, on which should the shipwreck of a small barque ensue, it will hardly be missed from amongst the great fleet of bold and gallant keels which in countless numbers throng and plough the wide literary ocean of the times. There are however many of the institutions, enterprises, habits, and usages of society in which even to the purblind eyes of a sexagenarian (reverential of the past, dissatisfied with the present, and distrustful of the future as such are usually and instinctively prone to be,) the present age has it must be admitted, decidedly improved upon that which preceded it; the full extent, and great progression of which, as compared with the past, those now conversant only with the present state of things, can probably hardly realize or appreciate.

We will advert in the first place by way of exemplifying our position, as perhaps the most important in itself, and the most striking in its developments, to the subject of education; to the advanced grades to which it has been carried and the different modes of instruction and inculcation adopted at these two periods upon the subjects of it, both in our higher seminaries of learning and in our common schools. As to the latter class, the time is well recollected (for the speaker was one of the subjects of their stinted instructions) when little beyond Dillworth's Spelling Book, the New England Primer, teaching by a double process the first letter of the alphabet,

and the first doctrine of the creed, through the instrumentality of the first poetical distich that the young minstrels of future times were taught to jingle together—

“In Adam’s fall,
We sinned all.”

When these recondite volumes, together with the Psalter, and in process of time and of intellectual juvenile development, the other portions of the Bible, constituted about the whole of the science of common school reading then taught. To which when was added a knowledge of an indifferent handwriting, and the first four rules of Arithmetic, and of casting interest from Pike’s treatise thereon—we have what then comprised about the whole of a common school education. The school houses too, in which these rudiments of learning were taught, were then little better than small barns, fitted up with coarse backless benches, on which the uneasy and restless urchins sat in both mental and bodily torture, until from sheer tedium, and to obtain a little ease to their aching spines, they fell half asleep into a recumbent posture, or betook themselves to enacting some antic or mischievous gambols, from which they were in due time brought to their bearings by a dexterous stroke of the ever-ready birchen rod, or the still more ready, convenient, and double purposed rule, serving in the two-fold capacity for forming straight lines on their writing books, and in that of a ferule for *straightening out* the crooked minded juveniles who made themselves the proper subjects of these magnetizing manipulations; an exercise which in a cold winter’s day was in one respect at least useful and almost necessary both for the master and the pupil, to put into circulation the half congealed blood of their shivering frames, and to impart to them that degree of *caloric*, which the wide open fireplace, although constantly and liberally fed with repeated arms full of green and crackling fagots failed to do. Such was the general range and grade of what was then esteemed to be a good country common school education; and such the usual and *convenient* mode of imparting it in our land, about fifty years since.

In our colleges and other high seminaries of education, a state of things much corresponding with this, both as to the extent of instruction and the mode of inculcation also existed. A slight knowledge of the Latin and Greek Grammars with the colloquies of Corderius ; the first four books of Virgil in Latin, and the four evangelists in Greek, was the extent of the requisite proficiency for entering college ; as to be able to construe and parse the whole of Virgil, and of Cicero's Orations ; to recite decently Watts' Logic, Blair's Rhetoric, Ferguson's Astronomy, Guthrie's Geography, Enfield's Natural Philosophy, Priestley's Lectures on History, and to master after a sort the whole of Pike's Arithmetic, and Paley's Moral Philosophy, with a smattering of Algebra, fluxions, and conic sections, constituted pretty much the whole of that circle of the learned sciences which entitled the young *savan* to the honors of a graduation, and to the flattering adjunct to his name of the first two letters of the alphabet—meaning in the vernacular, and endorsing upon his valued sheep-skin the flattering cognomen of a “Bachelor of the Arts !” Although not a single word had been taught of the now very useful and practical sciences of Chemistry, Mineralogy, Physiology, Political Economy, or Geology in general, through the graduate's entire course of instruction. Much in correspondence with the discipline of the lower schools, and the manner and means of teaching “the young idea how to shoot,” was that of the higher seminaries. We have now in our possession, by ancestral descent, a written copy of the laws of the college in New Jersey, then called Nassau Hall, and now known in common parlance as Princeton College, transcribed in the handwriting of one who was an undergraduate there in 1765 ; and though this is at a period somewhat more remote than the one twenty-five years after, of the general aspects and phases of which we have attempted this brief notice, yet little alteration in the matters of which this treats had then taken place, either in this or its other kindred institutions in the United States ; and of the laws, usages, and regulations of all which this may without injustice be considered as a pretty fair model. We will recount a few of these laws and

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regulations as not unfair samples of the spirit of the age and of the times, touching the then existing methods of education and discipline with the rising generation who were the subjects of them.

Extracts from the Collegiate Code of Princeton College in
Anno Domini 1765.

“ Every scholar shall keep his hat off about ten rods to the president, and about five to the tutors. Every scholar shall rise up and make his obeisance when the president goes in or out of the hall, or enters the pulpit on days of religious worship. When walking with a superior, they shall give him the highest place ; and when first coming into his company, they shall show their respects to him by pulling off their hats ; shall give place to him at any door or entrance, or meeting him going up and down stairs, shall stop, giving him the banister side ; shall not enter into his room without knocking at the door, or in any way intrude themselves upon him ; and shall never be first or foremost in any undertaking in which a superior is engaging or about to engage ; shall never use any indecent or rude behavior or action in a superior’s presence, such as making a noise, calling loud, or speaking at a distance, unless spoken to by him, if within hearing ; shall always give a direct pertinent answer, concluding with SIR !”

There was one of these observatory and *conservatory* regulations of so very minute and delicate a nature that it was not thought quite proper or decent to enact it in the vernacular tongue ; and so they very modestly threw over it the veil of the Latin language ; and which we give in the original as it stands recorded in the little statute book before us, but shall not now translate, even at the hazard of being supposed not ready or willing to gratify, as it may be thought we ought to do, the laudable and instinctive curiosity of our fair lady hearers. It runs thus in the stately language of Cicero and of Hortensius ; and with the precision and solemnity of an article from the Justinian code.

“ Quicunque contra collegium minixerit, vel ex fenestra aliquid sordii ejecierit, mulctetur unum solidum, si repetat admoneatur.”

The translation of this grave statute into our vernacular, may perhaps furnish a pleasant morning's exercise for some of the sophomore classes in the more advanced seminaries in our vicinity at the present day. But as the Latin classics are altogether eschewed it seems at the "Oneida Institute," it might be taken unkindly from us to set one of *her* Neophytes whatever might be the *complexion* of his general scholarship, to dig out quite so difficult a lesson from the dead rubbish of their detested heathen Latin, to be recited before a spare breakfast; and we therefore in all tenderness to their feelings and sensibilities mercifully forbear pressing this little matter any further in that direction.

Under the absurd and degrading servileance of this servile code, we have heard rehearsed by one who was a subject of them, many amusing anecdotes of the natural contumacy of those free thinking and high spirited students under whose iron rule they were attempted to be brought; and the ingenious modes which they sometimes resorted to for the purpose of defeating or evading the weight of their absurd penalties. In order to escape from the requirements of striking his colors, and doffing his *chapeau* when within the prescribed *striking distance* from the venerable president or the dignified tutors—young ELLSWORTH, who afterwards rose to the honorable rank of chief justice of the United States and to many other elevated stations in this country, and who was then a student there, cut off entirely the brim portion of his hat, leaving of it nothing but the crown, which he wore in the form of a skull cap on his head, and putting it under his arm when he approached their reverences. Being reproved for his perversity, and told that this was not a hat within the meaning and intent of the law which he was required to do his obeisance with, by removing it from his head, he then made bold to wear his skull cap into the chapel and recitation room, in presence of the authority. Being also then again reproved for wearing his hat in those forbidden and sacred places, he replied, that he had once supposed that it was in truth a veritable hat; but having been informed by his superiors that it was *no hat* at all, he had ventured to come into their presence as he supposed with his head

uncovered by that proscribed garment. But this dilemma was, as in his former position decided against him ; and no other alternative remained to him but to resume his full brimmed beaver and to comply literally with the enactments of the collegiate pandect.

In old YALE, of which venerable institution, the speaker was some fifty years since a rather troublesome and justly troubled member, this and other like absurd ordinances and observances existed and were prescribed for the students to observe towards the existing authority, and between the different classes in the same institution. Such as the freshman class being subjected to be made the waiters and servitors of the upper classes in doing their errands on the most trifling and humbling occasions ; in carrying and fetching their soiled or washed linen to and from the laundress, and bringing their beer, tobacco and pipes wherewith to regale themselves at their assembled parties and junketings ; a power which was often shamefully and wantonly abused by one party, but generally rigorously enforced against the other by the authorities of the college ; (who had themselves gone through the same trying ordeal,) by the way as they said of accustoming the green and yet flexible freshman to the restraints of wholesome discipline, and the salutary habits of obedience to his superiors in age and rank.

We wish that we could with truth recapitulate, as an offset to these deficiencies and absurdities, the superior state of moral discipline, and of social habits and recreations which distinguished these high seats of learning at the same period. But the *college buttery* kept under its roof, in a place of the most convenient access, with its viands of cakes, pies, nuts, beer, cider, mead and ("sub rosa,") cheap and adulterated wines, tempting the prurient appetites of the listless idler, would rise up in swift judgment against us ; as they do against the hoary wisdom which thus encouraged their wholly needless and injurious indulgence ; while the almost unrestricted intermingling in the social enjoyments, amusements and dissipations of the town or city around them, led to no good, and frequently to a ruinous relaxation of every studious habit, and not unfre-

quently into the paths of vicious irregularity and irreclaimable dissipation.

And as to the intellectual education of the female portion of the last century, how little more have we to say than that they learned at their transient country schools, taught by some smart spinster, to read passably in the Bible ; to repeat there, and on Saturday or Sunday evenings at home, the Shorter Catechism, which, if they fully understood when they had got through it, they certainly had sharper intellects than had some of their teachers; to get by heart Watts' Spiritual Songs ; scrawl a miserable handwriting ; and if deemed apt proficients, and ambitious of teaching others in their turn, to dig out their way through the first four rules of Arithmetic. Of the general Geography of the globe which they inhabited, there was hardly a book extant teaching it in our country, until Morse came out with his first octavo edition, from which they could learn it ; and as to Moral Philosophy and Astronomy, they were as far removed from their knowledge, as were the fixed stars from their reach or adequate comprehension. No Sunday schools, Bible classes, benevolent associations or literary and scientific lectures for the benefit either of the young or old of either sex, for their improvement and edification in the higher branches of science, and to fit them for any other than the every day domestic duties of a listless life.

What in most of these respects is now the improved state and condition both of our common schools and our higher literary institutions, this more intelligent age and audience need not to be informed ; a great portion of those before us having partaken and profited under their more enlarged and improved systems of instruction and of discipline, and *they* will not probably hesitate long in coming to the rational conclusion that in these respects at least the present generation have

"Grown wiser than their fathers were."

Whether they would be sustained in assuming also to have realized the other line of Watts' distich,

"And better know the Lord,"

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is quite another question, which it is feared will hardly obtain so strong and undivided an affirmative verdict “ye yourselves being judges.” Thus much in exposition of the advances and improvements made and introduced within the last half century in relation to the subjects and methods of intellectual education.

We will pass on to some other topics connected with these bearings of our subject. We might allude here as a sample of the staid and stereotype habits of that age, to the time when our revered Doctors of Divinity and their less honored and untitled brethren made it the main object of their weekly labors to attempt to untie the five knotty points of their religious creed, by two long and highly elaborated sermons a week, devoted chiefly to that favored topic in the prevailing theology of the day. When the clergyman literally and usually *settled himself* as in a secure harbor in his parish for life, and rarely left it until his body was carried to his last and final abode, followed by the tears and regrets of his bereaved, affectionate, and ever-trusting parishioners. And when a worthy country gentleman who once sufficiently obtained the favor of his town or county to be honored with a seat in the public councils of his country, rarely lost it except through his gross misconduct, or became incompetent to its duties by the infirmities of age or disease, or by death. But those days and those usages are long since past, with the shadowy personages who acted their important dramatic parts in their great theatres of action and of renown ; and other actors and far other scenes have opened upon those which preceded them. Now, a stated clergyman has hardly got acquainted with the people of his charge, and learned the shortest way to his pulpit, before his best seasoned sermons begin to fall “stale, flat and unprofitable,” upon the better cultivated and more fastidious taste of his hearers, and he is pretty soon served by them with a gentle hint, and if that be not sufficient, with a loud warning that it is high time for him to pull up his stakes and to quit, and give place to some one who will furnish them at least for a time, some more satisfactory and inviting viands of intellectual and religious fare.

And although there are doubtless many inconveniences, and some hardship and injustice growing out of these modern deviations from "the good old paths," in which our venerable fathers were accustomed to walk, yet we cannot say that this change upon the whole, (ill advised and capricious as may often be the practice under it,) is not quite as favorable to the mutual improvement of both parson and parishioner, as it may be more conformable to the progressive spirit of the age, and the "go-a-head" disposition of the times.

And as to the official permanence now-a-days, of our elective public servants, (very "humble servants" indeed they usually are to us, at least just before an election;) that of the dancing figures in a puppet show, which the political game in more than one respect much resembles, is hardly more changeful and evanescent. To be *danced up* the great exhibition hall, without much merit one year, and *danced down* it without much crime the next, is the pretty general bill of fare for those sort of entertainments; and whether this course of things be a modern improvement in our system of experimenting, may perhaps be left as a doubtful and unsolved case. Although it is certainly not to be much complained of by him who having very often been admitted into the temple of honor upon pretty loose and easy terms, should he be very soon asked to walk out of it, when his company has become unwelcome, from pretty slight causes too. "Light come, light go," is a maxim whose truth is sustained by the experience of the world; and that "what comes over the devil's back, should go under his belly," is a result at once natural and consequential. And so we leave that question as a moot point for further advisement and consideration. "*Curia advisare vult.*"

Saying nothing about those vast improvements in mechanical inventions and the arts, which have so immeasurably multiplied and increased every sort of product and manufacture, either for use or ornament, within the period designated, we will advert only to two or three particulars; such as facilities for personal transportation and for trade; and habits of social entertainment and modes of dress; matters falling

within the common observation and every day business of all, in which the modern innovations have been decidedly for the better. For instance, it is within a little more than fifty years' recollection, that but *a single line of public stages was run on this continent.* This was on the seaboard between Boston and Philadelphia. They made progress in two days, *with good luck*, from Boston to Springfield, not quite a hundred miles. But they often fell short of this when the roads were bad, and took a part of the third day to effect it; such was once the speaker's luck when a youthful passenger in one of their heavy wagon-like coaches. The same route by almighty steam is now run over in five hours, quite too early for dinner. And so it is now on all the great routes of the country. Quite an improvement certainly for a traveller who is in a hurry, which every American traveller always is. It may however well be questioned, whether any more individual comfort is taken, or improvement made in this modern mode than was in those days by the New England or Dutch farmer, who after he had done up his early fall work, took into his strong wagon drawn by a pair of his fat horses, his wife, and a son or daughter or two, and started on a family visit to his distant friends and relatives; drove perhaps forty-five miles in a day, partaking by the way, of the good cold cut, biscuit and dough nuts which they carried with them; surveyed and talked over amongst themselves all the new objects which their leisurely progress gave them full opportunity to observe on the way; put up at night at a comfortable country tavern; and after a warm and quiet supper retired to a good night's rest; and rose refreshed for another day's interesting and un-hurried travel. How different this musing meandering course from the crazing, unobservant, lightning-like speed, and the pulling and hauling which characterize our present rail road and steam boat mode of darting through the world at the rate of "thirty knots the hour!" *Single horse wagons* were then unknown. They are the invention of the last thirty five years, and were called *Dearborns*, from the circumstance of General Dearborn having journeyed in one of them, in a part of the country where it was a novelty a little before the last

British war. A gig or chaise, as it was then called, was before that time its only substitute for a single carriage, although that was owned by but a few comparatively, out of the large cities. The speaker crossed the Green Mountains between the Connecticut and Housatonic rivers, in the first one that was ever driven over them, where now travellers fly by steam at the rate of twenty-five or thirty miles the hour, as before mentioned. In the country villages, both the clergyman and his parishioners, who had occasion to go any considerable distance to meeting or to visit, and who could not afford to keep a double horse wagon, took their wives "*a pillion*" behind them ; perhaps with one small child on the pummel of his saddle, and she with another, if they were blessed with so many, in her lap. Such *equitations* have been seen often by many eyes now living. A sight of one of them at this day would attract as much notice in our streets as would that of a caravan or menagerie of wild beasts. This was not a very comfortable mode of "going ahead ;" and our country gentlemen and their families of this day, do much better in their modern gigs, buggies and calashes.

Then as to some of the habits of living and the modes of social entertainment, matters are clearly much mended since the time when the country clergyman and his deacons *took their regular forenoon flip or toddy*, and those of the city their hot or cool *punch*, according to the season, before dinner ; and when knotty points of divinity were discussed in their social circles by Doctors HOPKINS, EMMONS, WEST, and other lesser lights of the church, under a cloud of tobacco smoke, so thick as nearly to suffocate a rash unseasoned intruder from the heedless world who rushed thoughtlessly into their presence from the fresh air without ; and ever and anon, when the argument in hand slackened a little, *its thread was strengthened* by the application of a little "hard cider," from the silver can or tankard which stood on the side-table or cupboard ready filled for their reverend use. These are no fancy pictures ; they are sketched from the once *living and acting originals*, which are still vivid before us, and *quorum pars parva fuimus* ; so far at least as to bring the pipes, fill

the tankard, and reverence deeply the congregated wisdom and piety in the best parlor then and there assembled. Now, forsooth, a clergyman or a deacon must be careful and not take too much even of old wine *by way of medicine*; or he will be shewn up alamode the *Reverend Doctor Sprague* in some Temperance Recorder, as no thorough te-totaller at any rate. And this altered condition of things is, notwithstanding some unreasonable and uncharitable annoyances incident to its requirements, clearly a great advance and improvement upon the treasured and venerable “wisdom of our revered ancestors.”

Then again as to our personal costume and the fashion of our dress. (I speak only of that of the gentlemen, not venturing to meddle with so *ticklish* a subject as that of the ladies.) Although one can hardly avoid snatching a furtive sideway glance, as their departed shadows pass in tempting retrospect before him, at the spindling stilts in the form of what were called *stick heels*, on which our venerable matrons of that day used to elevate their stately forms about four inches above their natural stature; and the wide spreading *expanders* of their delicate dimensions called *hoops*, with which they encircled themselves, in order to enlarge by a few degrees the already liberal circumference of their equatorial regions. Of the modern substitutes for these *outre* and hollow appliances, we, at our time of life, may reasonably be supposed to observe and to know nothing; and of course shall venture to say nothing. This being, perhaps, also one of those *uncome-atable* and nice eases depending upon *exact mensuration* and *close scrutiny* in which a fair comparison between ancient and modern dimensions would be a difficult and delicate task; and on that and other accounts probably “the least said the soonest mended.” And we make our escape gladly from out of the range of these formidable female entrenchments, to the more manageable dress, costume and habiliments of the gentlemen of that age and time. For of all things, we should dislike to get into *a bustle* with the Amazonian phalanx here or elsewhere; as in such an unequal war the least we could expect would be to have the whole army of *bishops* in their

full and formidable *armory* down upon us. We would sedulously avoid, at our time of life, doing any thing that might reasonably lead to a state of belligerency with our fellow beings of any sex, cast, or character. But if in the pursuit of duty dictated, or obligation assumed, “offences must needs come,” and *civil contests* are not to be honorably avoided, let them come off rather with the bluff race of *whiskerandos*, with whose tactics and stratagems we are more familiar, and can better grapple with and circumvent. And therefore taking our respectful leave of these our “fair daughters of Israel,” we “turn ourselves again unto the Gentiles” of our own sex, with whom as more irreclaimable reprobates is to be found our main business.

The dress of the gentlemen of the present day is in the main a great and decided improvement over the old fashions, both in point of convenience and rational appearance. There were then the *white broad bottomed wigs of the clergy*, which as they passed, the children of the parish made their manners to, and a portion of the parishioners, (not *all* old women neither,) almost worshipped in breach of the second commandment—had the object bowed down to, been like unto any other thing, to be found in either of the upper, nether, or lower kingdoms of creation, which it was not; only that by way of a slant upon it, some of the wicked boys used, when they got among themselves, to call it “a nanny.” There were in proper keeping with these, the red scarlet coats and cloaks of the high dignitaries of civil office, nearly blinding the eyes of the common people with the glare of their imposing majesty; and when, as is well recollectcd, the governors of the plain people of Massachusetts used to exhibit themselves on election and other great gala days, equipped in a full suit of crimson silk velvet; a most gaudy and attractive spectacle to the young admirers of official splendor, and the high dignity of “God’s vicegerents,” the exalted rulers of the people. And then the *famous cocked hats* too, *instar omnium*, which were mounted, of course, by every decent gentleman who aspired to be a leading man in his town, or to cut a respectable and commanding figure in his weekly goings forth to and

from the parish meeting house. All these unnatural and inconvenient habiliments have given place to plain, substantial broadcloth or cotton, which much better defends against wind and weather ; to plain unfrizzled and uncrisped locks (to say nothing of the sedulously cultivated and valued whiskers) which will bear wet and stormy as well as dry and calm weather ; and to uncocked broad brim hats, which are permitted to spread out and protect the eyes and the face of the wearer from the rays of the sun and the inclemencies of the different seasons. But the picture of a full-dressed beau or dandy of that or a little later day, would throw quite into the shade the most finished specimens of that *genus butterfly* of the present times ; as the former would be quite a curiosity in our streets now, we will attempt a crayon sketch of his costume, for the benefit of his successors in that line, whom he so much outshone in every essential absurdity, however highly the latter may think of their own prowess and enterprise in that line. *Imprimis*, a dark green or blue broadcloath coat, high standing cape of white or crimson velvet, with two rows of buttons covered with gold or silver tinsel, about the size of a dollar ; vest of white or buff colored kerseymere, gaily embroidered with colored silk, and adorned with gold or silver cord and spangles ; short breeches of the same, or satin of any fancied color, made to as close a fit as his own worthless dog skin, and fastened at the knee by large silk bows or stone knee buckles ; white silk stockings with open clock work ; with an apology for shoes, in the form of light pumps, merely covering the toes and the bottom of the feet, surmounted by a proportionate buckle ; a full plaited wide ruffle, pendant out from the bosom and the wristbands of the shirt ; a cravat stuffed with cotton padding so as to bring it even with the chin, helping the empty headed wearer to hold his head up in the world without much effort, and less merit ; the hair saturated with pomatum and powder, craped or frizzled into a rising cushion before, and with the additional splicing on of a false *queue*, twisted and turned up behind into a club about the size of his wrist ; something like a half hour's operation this ; but it made fine times for the barbers, who

were nearly ruined when the democratic habits and fashions introduced by the French revolution made it popular for every would-be patriot and aspiring demagogue at least, to wear his hair *a la croppe*, and appear in a rather slouching and careless costume throughout. The country bumpkins satisfied their *hair brained* aspirations in that line with suspending from the back of their necks a twelve inch eel-skin appendage, which, when early and successfully cultivated and attended to, hung down to their hips, and had it have been first discovered in an African wilderness, might not unnaturally have been mistaken by a native for the lapsed tail of some unfortunate monkey then and there accustomed to wander, and shorn of his pendant honors in an unlucky foray with one of his bellicose fellows. But I had almost forgotten our fashionables' boots, extended up to the knee bands, to which they were fastened by straps and buckles attached thereto, with fair white tops, and peaked toes ; the legs made elastic like India rubber by what was called *putting a tuck* in them ; and when drawn on as they were by many a hard effort, fitting all the way to the limb like a tight stocking.

Such is a synopsis of the full bodily equipment of a *fine gentleman* of most of our principal cities and villages about the year 1793. In the remote country towns these were vied with and imitated, though at a very humble distance, as we had then no rail roads to convey the ever-changing patterns and fashions in due season, and few mechanics who were competent to getting them up in a proper style. Now our present fashions and modes of dress, even the most *outré* of them, are altogether more rational, convenient and comfortable than those which we have truly and without exaggeration chronicled and reported.

It is we believe, a well ascertained fact from authentic statistical tables, imperfect and scanty as those yet are in this country, that notwithstanding the increased dissipation of time, of money, and of morals, in the large cities and towns, and amongst certain classes of society, there is yet a gradual diminution of mortality, and an average prolongation of human life with the great mass of society, compared with any

former period. In England and Europe in general this is a still better ascertained and marked fact, and is thus stated from a work of good authority.

"Since 1650, all the counties of Europe, as well as the principal towns, present a gradual diminution of mortality. The value of life has doubled in London in the last century, and in many cities the probability of life to a citizen has gradually become five times greater. The increased salubrity is referable to various causes; the principal of which are the improved condition of the lower classes of society as regards food, clothing and fuel; better habits as respect cleanliness, ventilation, and the use of spirituous liquors, and improved medical practice, especially in preventive means."

The same effects, owing much doubtless to the same causes, have been ascertained to have taken place in this country, where careful inquiries have been instituted. All this too, denotes *progress*, and not retrocession and declension, in the course of human affairs, both here and elsewhere.

In most of the enterprises and habits which we have glanced at, there has then been obviously a great and undeniable advance and improvement in the means and modes of efficient enterprise, of social and individual enjoyment, and the general well being of society. And in these respects certainly those who ask "why were the former days better than these?" do not "inquire wisely." This is *one side* of the picture. Would that we could congratulate ourselves as surely, touching our higher destinies for the future, and upon our having made as great advances in the road of public patriotism, personal honor and integrity, and private morality. But in these regards it will probably be universally acknowledged that we have but little to boast of as yet; although we have not the heart to add, that we have less still to hope for.

We will but glance briefly at the present position and prospects of civil and social society, as affected and portended by the "signs of the times," and as developed through the new or increased agencies which have been brought to bear upon them. The speaker is by no means prone to be carried away with the idea, that we are always living in the midst of some *particular and portentous crisis*. He has lived to see so

many such alledged or predicted ones, both in the moral, social and political world, pass off without any disastrous concussion, or any very essential or wonderful change in the existing order of things, to expect much more from their occurrence or effect upon the general state of human affairs at any particular time. Whether it be from a somewhat different habit of viewing things, growing out of more advancing years, and increasing infirmity of nerves, he will not affirm. But from a general view of the great movements of the age, and the strange "signs of the times," at the present day, it would seem as though the new and surprising developments which have of late years, and are now manifesting themselves in the elements and powers, both of the physical and moral world, have a natural and inevitable tendency to lead, as they have in many respects already led, to some new and surprising results into the future condition of human affairs, and in the state and destiny of man in his relations to himself and to the world.

Through a new combination and application of some of the material elements, the resistless agency of the printing press, and the almost omnipotent power of steam, forces have been applied and faculties created or enlarged to a degree which has made of civilized man, as it were, a new race of giants or anakims, both for the purpose of useful productiveness and conservatism on the one hand, and for that of mutual destruction, waste, and annoyance, multiplied more than a thousand fold, on the other. Cotemporaneously with this increased and unprecedented power of these natural physical agents and servants to man wielded by human power, the *mind of man itself* seems from some quarter or other also to have received some new active and irrepressible impulses. He has discerned as he thinks within himself and his fellows, new and startling powers and faculties heretofore but faintly dreamed of ; giving him new relations both to himself and to all existence around him, or in the more remote portions of the universe ; such, substantially is the new science of Phrenology, with its carryings out of animal magnetical influences and operations upon the human system ; through the agency of which there

are certainly some wonderful, and as yet unexplained phenomena in relation to the nature and powers of the mind in its connection with the body which it inhabits and with the mind and bodies of others. Another portion of mankind have discovered as they think, and so confidently believe and teach, new disclosures or revelations of wonderful and portentous events touching man's immediate destiny which are very soon to open and display themselves upon the human vision. Such is the new and increasing sect calling themselves "New Adventarians," now numbering their thousands in some of the most enlightened portions of this country; who confidently declare to us, that within a very few months is to be witnessed "a new heaven and a new earth," and man and all his present works are then to be changed and "pass away with a great noise" forever. It would appear from the history of the world however that such like portending auguries and predictions are not entirely of modern growth and cultivation. The prurient spirit which prompts to them, was as Horace tells us, moving upon the face of the troubled waters of the Roman Empire in the age of the Cæsars and the Antonines:

* * * * * "Terruit urbem,
Terruit gentes, grave ne rediret
Sæculum Pyrrhæ, nova monstra questæ."

When cities and when nations terror-struck,
Shook with the fear of Pyrrha's dreaded age,
Portended monsters and "chimeras dire."

But all these and many other like auguries and vaticinations have long since, with their self-deceived and deceiving prophets, seers, and soothsayers, passed away into the land of shadows; but "the earth abideth," still continuing to revolve as before in its divinely appointed sphere, steadfast and unjostled amidst the conflict of the elements, and the rise and fall of its ephemeral tenants and occupants.

"Fluit, fluit, et semper cucurret amnis."

It rolls and rolls, and shall forever roll.

We would not, because it is not necessary for our present purpose, either affirm or deny anything either of the truth or

soundness of many of these speculations, claims, principles, discoveries or predictions, (although the speaker has formed no doubting or concealed opinions on them for himself;) and we enlarge nothing upon the wide spread delusions of *Mormonism, no church organization, no human government,* and various other *transcendentalisms* of the times, which occupy and agitate the heaving billows of the human mind, at the present day. But under these aspects, is not this already almost "a new world," compared with any that has been known before it ; with new natural elements and agents ; or what is nearly the same, new applications and combinations of the old ones ; producing new results, impulses, developments, and operations of matter and of mind, before incredible and almost undreamed of, or imagined by the wildest fancy ? In some of these relations the intellectual powers of man, would appear to have outstripped his moral cultivation ; the centrifugal forces to have become disproportioned to the centripetal ones, and which at times, for want of some effective balance wheel, seem to threaten the fatal disadjustment or destruction of the impetuous machine which it impels.

Another grave question is, can this sweeping tide of many rushing waters now be expected to recede, or to stand still where it is ? It may, it is believed, be considered as pretty certain that it will do neither. It must in the natural order of things, and in the nature of man himself, be expected still to press onward and upward, driven by the ever increasing steam-forced powers and passions of man's restless and struggling spirit ; to what end, and in what final consummation, he only who permits and governs it can, as it would seem to us, at all with any certainty predict. These new agencies and energies, when directed and inspired by the spirit of love and humanity, and impelled by angelic hands, are indeed capable of, and tending to much good, and of imparting much benefit and comfort to the human race ; but, when driven by the spirit of devilism and hatred, are equally capable of, and tending to much misery and desolation through this fair creation of God, which under its influences and its heaving "ground swells," must, it would seem ere long become either

a paradise or a pandemonium, according to the direction which its enhanced powers and forces should happen or by the hand of the Great Architect himself be directed to take and be applied to. It is not as of old the common “potsherds” striving with the old “potsherds of the earth,” but it will be as it were a new and enlarged race of human monsters fighting the great battle of Gog and Magog, and like Milton’s devils in the infernal regions, hurling mountains and oceans at each other, whenever there may come on a general conflict amongst them, either individually or in national or civil contests of the masses.

And what is the position and aspect of this, our own country, amidst this general fermentation and excitement of matter and of mind, and this threatened turmoil and conflict of the elements of nature and of life? How stand our great political and civil institutions and the social and moral principles upon which they depend for their existence and perpetuity? Where, to touch upon one point only, is the adhesive power, which is to hold together our national confederacy in its effective power and strength much longer? Many of the states have already ceased to regard, not only their own solemn obligations to themselves and their individual and corporate obligees, but also those to the Union itself, when they conflict, or seem to conflict at all with their own supposed temporary interest, or with the selfish views of a local and aspiring faction among themselves, who may have seized upon the rule and conduct of their affairs. And there seems to be no inherent and adequate power to compel the delinquents or recusants to a compliance with those obligations. And neither in the national or state councils, does there appear to be, as it may be feared, sufficient moral power and responsibility left to resist effectually the sweeping floods of faction, passion and venality which too often overwhelm and counteract every better principle. And when we see intelligent and leading men in our legislative bodies getting up, and gravely maintaining what they must know to be the most palpable and untenable absurdities, touching constitutional and moral rights and obligations; a majority of such bodies sanctioning, and

a party press universally sustaining and echoing them—can we fail to see that constitutional ligaments are but cobwebs, and the moral sense but as smoking flax, in the reckless hands of our strong political Sampsons, when they have a sinister purpose to answer by rending or disregarding them? We apply not here these remarks and strictures, to any such political party as we may suppose more especially to deserve them: *qui capit, ille facit*; let those who feel that they may deserve them make their own application.

And in view of all these considerations, with their apparent and obvious tendencies, and prospective portents, we are at times, though but rarely, almost disposed to yield to the desponding prediction of an old and experienced political friend, now attached to no existing party, “that we have not improbably seen the last presidential election under the constitution of 1788.” These are unpleasant and perhaps extravagant and too sombre views of “the present and the future.” But it can surely do no harm to look at them for a moment, improbable and distant as they may seem to us to be, and little as we may regard in themselves the supposed wild and fanatic delusions of the day. Are they not all pregnant indications at least of the pent-up winds, wrestling, and the storm and tempest struggling for deliverance within their dark and deep recesses? At any rate, the most obtuse mind, and the least acute sensibility cannot fail to discern in the events and aspects of “the present,” enough to awaken and engage all its powers of observation and reflection, with however much coolness, placidity and unconcern he may look forward upon the prospects and foreshadowings of “the future.”

As this is the age of “progress,” and the day of “radical reform,” a few suggestions on the spirit and tendency of some of the efforts made and making in this behalf, from one who from necessity, rather than from disinclination has been rather an observer of, than a participator in their movements and operations, may not be altogether out of place or character in connection with our general subject.

Approving as we do of the principles, partaking of the general views, and sympathising in the aspirations of many of the

"men of progress," and the professed reformers of the age and the times, there are at least two particulars in their *modus operandi*, for producing their professedly desired results, which we can neither approve, partake of, or participate in ; since, as appears to us, they are entirely at war with their first great professed principle, of the "largest liberty," and exceedingly ill adapted to attain their favorite object. One is that which can probably not be better described or defined than by calling it by a homemade but very expressive word "*one-idealism* ;" that is, when an ardent, self-opined, perhaps ambitious man has strongly imbibed one idea, or enlisted himself to effect one particular object, that he should then think and act as though he believed *that* the only one in the world worthy of pursuit ; and to make an adherence to, and engagedness in it both in kind and degree an *exclusive test* of general character, both in religious, political and social life ; saying to others who have moved not yet quite so far or so fast in his steam-travelled path, "get out of my way ;" or like the Pharisee of old, "stand you by, I am holier than thou." Thus in truth, attempting to work his way by the law of force, and by no means by that which they usually profess, that of universal love and Christian kindness. These most usually run to be sure at starting, a most rapid and hurried race ; but at the same time an equally short and fruitless one. Need we go very far from home to realize the existence and exercise of such a spirit and temper, and to look for its natural results ?

It began amongst us with the breaking forth of the Anti Masonic excitement, just and rightful perhaps in its general principles, and stimulated to action by the abuses of the obnoxious institution which it was its professed aim to overthrow and subvert. But both in church and state, its zealous partisans endeavored, and, to a certain extent, and within certain limits succeeded in making *that* the peculiar test question of the day, both for the enjoyment of the rites and ordinances of the former, and for the exercise of the political and civil offices of the latter. Their success, was as we all know, short lived and evanescent ; and now Anti Masonry has long been a departed phantom, or a dead carcase, which few think of,

and fewer still care to regard. Then came the Temperance reform, admirable and beneficent in its principles, happy in its legitimate results upon the well being of society, and highly promotive of individual happiness. But that too, must be made as its engaged advocates said, *another test question*; and we had Temperance tickets for elective offices, and total abstinence tests for admittance to the rites and ordinances of the church; followed up in some states by the penalties of legal enactments, and "fifteen gallon measures" wherewith to guage the appetites and the consciences of the rum and whiskey drinkers. How all these projects ended we need not to be informed. But the "Washingtonians" the more wise and discreet successors of these zealous reformers, have now found out and reduced to practice "a more excellent way." And what has been and still is their much greater progress and success, we also well know. Then came the "Abolitionists," (technically so called,) with an equally rigid and still broader *test*; comprehending both sins of commission and omission; and excluding from their communion both civil and ecclesiastical, not only all who *acted* against their views touching the question of slavery, but all who shewed not themselves hearty, zealous, and out-spoken co-actors in their assemblies and associations; denouncing the old tests of religious communion and political confidence on the one hand, as anti Christian and anti social, and setting up new and narrower ones on the other, as requisites for admission into their fraternities and associations, which they presumptuously denominate "the only true Christian Church or community." With one voice vehement for "the largest liberty" of conscience and of action, and with the same voice instituting the most abject slavery of the mind as the only pass way to their favorable regard; and even avowing as has one of their "class leaders," "that he would not employ a shoe black for his boots who would not first qualify himself for his employment by adopting *his* creed on this test question of his character." How narrow and unjustifiable in themselves, how contrary to the free spirit of the age, at variance with their own professed general principles, and what a snail paced tortoise like progress

these reformers of our civil and religious Institutions have been making or are likely to make with their cause under the exercise of such principles and measures, it needs no wizard or prophet to reveal to us.

And now in these latter days, have risen a new race of reformers and religionists before alluded to, and known as “New Adventarians,” who boldly denounce all other classes who are engaged in other objects and speculations, as “blind leaders of the blind,” and as employed in pursuits utterly vain and worthless, in view of that great “consummation of all things,” and in the contemplation of which, as they maintain, every faculty should be employed, and every sense and aspiration be absorbed. And to most or all of these heterogeneous, and yet in one sense homogeneous classes of “one idea” speculators and reformers may not inaptly be applied Cowper’s characteristic description :—

“ No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
Till all mankind were like himself possess’d.

* * * * *

Discoverers of they know not what, confined,
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind.”

All these intolerant and illiberal dogmas and projects proceed on the narrow and false assumption that there is but one single test of moral or social character varying with the age or the circumstances surrounding the subject of it; whereas man is not only “a bundle of habits,” but also his moral character is made up of various and mixed ingredients all of which should be possessed in due proportion to each other, and cultivated with equal care, in order to compose a perfect and harmonious whole, and those are but moral quacks and empirics who would thus disjoin and repudiate all but one item of them.

The other great error, if not sin of many of these reformers of the age it is conceived is, their often appealing both in their writing and oral inculcations, in the style of a designing demagogue, to the lower passions and propensities of the mixed mass whom they would influence in order to propitiate

their favor, and gain a portion of them to their particular views on the subjects which they would urge upon their attention. Depicting to what in common parlance are commonly denominated the lower and poorer classes in society, the great and unjust inequality of their condition compared with that of the higher and more opulent ones. Forgetful or wholly regardless of how that inequality may have arisen or been brought about, whether through providential dispensations, or the different degrees of talent, industry, and good habits of the different subjects of each. This course of treatment of the diseased state of human society, even when not practiced as it is to be apprehended it too often is, from a spirit of mischievous and ambitious demagoguery, is not without its many dangers and abuses.

And at the hazard of being esteemed an obdurate, hide-bound conservative, which we must repeat, we are far, very far from being, we would venture to throw out our apprehensions, whether the style in which they insist upon inculcating, and the extent to which they are in the habit of pushing their doctrines and their teachings as to certain topics of the day, is not of very questionable justice and good effect. Not, therefore, in relation to many of their general views of the present position and relations of civil and social society, but in sincerity and in apprehensive earnestness would we suggest for their sober consideration, whether in the way in which they often treat of these matters, there is not great danger that in dwelling upon the natural equality of all men and their undoubted equal right to life, its enjoyments and blessings, contrasting them as they do in vivid colors with the general state of practical inequality, in the means of obtaining them which actually exists in all the various departments of civil, domestic and social life; whether this is not too frequently done in a manner and to an extent quite as much calculated to stir up the envy and the hatred of one class against the other, and to incite the former to forcible and unlicensed methods of obtaining their different objects and desires, as it is to conciliate the sympathies, and excite the humane efforts of the other class to remedy these evils, so far as may be practicable, con-

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sistent with the fixed laws of nature and the superior rewards consequent upon and due to the superior efforts of industry and moral virtue. Let us dwell perpetually and vividly upon one side of this question to perhaps an improvident man who has but a cold potatoe for his dinner, while his more fortunate, perhaps more provident neighbor has a rich surloin of beef and its trimmings for his, and it is a great and may be made an almost irrepressible temptation to the former to resolve upon restoring the unequal balance of this hard inequality by any means whatever, and to become if it be necessary to that end, very different from a long suffering and ever enduring *non-resistant* in carrying his purposes into effect. No indeed, this is neither the most ready or safe way of restoring the balance, or calculated to produce that happy condition of things preluded in Miss Martineau's beautiful lines, "the fraternity of man" when man with man shall—

"Live as they worship, side by side,
Their common claims revere."

We trust that these suggestions will not be received as the portentous and vain croakings of staid and timid "conservatism," which like senile childhood, lives only in the past, sees in the present little but declension and rash innovation, and descries in the future nothing but ruinous destruction of the venerated and consecrated temples before whose sacred fanes he has been accustomed to bow himself, and in whose doctrines and dogmas he alone recognizes "the pure milk" of the political, the literary and the religious world. Doubtless in these views as in almost everything else, there is a middle, just and discreet pathway which, when taken usually conducts the wary and way-wise traveller to the most safe and certain results. *In medias tutissimus ibis*, is a maxim certainly not to be despised or disregarded, perverted though it may often be, and surely is, by the ultra conservative, the tide waiters and the "waiters upon providence," who are ever "sitting upon the fence," watching for some convenient place where they may jump off, and from whence they may throw themselves and their future fortunes, into the passing and swelling

current, which promises to bear its floating barques with their insured cargoes into a safe harbor, and to a profitable market, for their advertised wares.

But in the much better, eloquent, and well chosen language of Mr. Justice Story, " Considerations not less discouraging must arise, if either of the other two extremes of opinion are to possess an enduring influence. The truth is, that the past is not everything, nor the future everything, nor the present everything. The intellect of man is now neither in its infancy, nor in its decrepitude. HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, whether it be for ornament or use, for pleasure or instruction, is the accumulation of the wisdom and genius of all ages, and is, like the ocean, composed of contributions from infinitely various sources, whose currents have mingled together from the beginning, and must continue so to do, to the end of time. Sound the depths as you may, they will be found not entirely the same, nor entirely different. The shoals and the quick-sands may be removed from one side; but they have often only shifted to the other. The waters may have become more clear and transparent in some parts; but at the same time, more turbid and shallow in others. The general level has not materially changed in height, or the current in its breadth, although occasional tides may have ebbed and flowed with irregular and sometimes desolating power. In some places the alluvial deposits have buried the ancient landmarks; while in others they have been torn away, or submerged. So in some measure has it been with the history of the human mind. What has been gained in one direction has been almost simultaneously lost in another. The known of one age has become the obscure of the next, and the lost of the succeeding. The favorite pursuits and studies of one age, have sunk into insignificance or neglect into another. The value as well as the interest, of particular researches has fluctuated with the passions, and the theories, and the fashions of the day. And while each successive generation has imagined itself to stand upon the shoulders of all, that preceded them, and flattered itself with the belief that it surveyed all things with a more comprehensive power, and a less obstructed vis-

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ion, it has forgotten, that on every side there is a natural boundary to the intellectual horizon, at which every object becomes obscure, or evanescent ; and that just in proportion as we advance in one direction, we may be receding from well defined and fixed lines of light in the other.”

For the particular consideration of the younger portion of our respected audience, through whose perhaps mistaken partiality we have been honored with this opportunity of standing in a position, and occupying a place reared by their enterprise, and devoted principally to their intellectual and moral improvement, permit us to suggest a few brief hints of a somewhat personal nature ; intended under any aspects in which the present age may present itself, or the “signs of the times” may be thought in future to portend, to bear on their future well being, pursuits and destinies, in their progress through that perilous journey of life which is just opening upon their rising horizon, and which we entitle what they in fact were in their origin and conception :

BROKEN AND BRIEF HINTS TO YOUNG MEN,

FROM THE JOURNAL OF A SICK ROOM’S REFLECTIONS.

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, but remember, * * * * * ”

Although the speaker has prefixed a scriptural quotation to these few closing and desultory thoughts, he has not the ambition or the presumption to assume the office of a scriptural preacher, or to affect the port and bearing of a religious sermonizer. Such an assumption would neither befit his own position, nor be appropriate to the occasion which has called them forth. He has but adopted part of a *broken text*, in correspondence with, and conformity to the few *broken hints* and suggestions which he may throw out, flowing fitfully and irregularly, as they have, from a *broken* and frail cistern of nearly exhausted and troubled waters.

PUBLIC DUTIES, AND OBJECTS OF PERSONAL AMBITION AND PURSUIT.—Every man, young or old, has, of course, an opin-

ion to make up and a duty to perform, touching the public concerns and interests of his country, which he is not at liberty to omit or to disregard ; and when called upon by its condition or the dangers which may threaten it, he is bound to examine from his best lights the questions presented to him, form his deliberate judgment thereon, and act according to its results, and as guided by the dictates of a well informed conscience in the premises.

But there is always much false show of *mock patriotism* put forth by the zealous and interested partisans of the day to cover their sinister designs and self-seeking, and which is but too often successful with their unsuspecting and uninitiated followers and supporters. Let all young men, however, who hope to establish for themselves in future life permanent and safe reliances of fortune, of character, and of tranquility, be cautioned against setting their hearts, or making their main dependencies upon political pursuits, objects and promotions, or the supposed benefits and emoluments expected to flow to them from those unreliable and generally utterly delusive sources.

Political ambition, and the promotion calculated upon from its pursuit, is a chase which when closely pursued, more often than otherwise perverts the high and honorable principles of the engrossed, impatient, and aspiring mind, which engages in it, and unsuits it for the cool, patient and successful pursuit of better, more reliable, but less exciting objects. In our country, no man can *travel all lengths with any party*, without sometimes crossing the tracks of the *straight path* of duty and of conscience. And yet such are too often and too much its requirements as a condition on which to entitle its anxious and sedulous followers to their due share of the honors and emoluments which it may have to bestow upon its favorite votaries. “The madness of many for the gain of a few,” is but too just an epitome of party ethics. Very few indeed, compared with the whole, are they of those who crowd its bustling and jostling ranks, who draw any of its beneficial and permanent prizes ; and those few, often through the legerdemain of some sly trick, dishonorable compromise of prin-

ple, or by the unfair *turning and twisting* of the great political wheel. This, every observing and disinterested spectator cannot fail to see, who looks but slightly at the game which is going on and the shifting political *phantasmagoria* which are constantly and yearly passing before him.

How ill-advised and short-sighted must it then be for a young man of correct sentiments, elevated views and high aims, to sacrifice better and more enduring objects, that he may fit himself to become one of the dancing, wire-moved puppets in such an inglorious exhibition ? Let him rather wait patiently and firmly in his own fast and well-anchored boat of principle and of honor, for the favoring tide to approach and buoy him upward and onward, if it will, without striving to accommodate his course to its shifting and muddy surges, (and if it so happen that it never does reach him, it will be of little matter to him in the end;) rather submit to this result, than to be forever following its various ebbs and flows, to the evident danger of his shipwreck at last, the loss of his "household gods," and his more valuable and honestly gained possessions and enjoyments. This is one of the alluring but dangerous rocks, which all young aspiring navigators will do well to avoid. There are a thousand others of a more private and personal nature some of which may here be briefly hinted at.

PERSONAL HABITS AND INDULGENCIES.—It is probable that young men pretty universally esteem it a fortunate circumstance, and a desirable object, that they now are, or soon may be enabled to command and enjoy the many personal gratifications, indulgencies, and allurements of life, which fortune may have placed within their reach, or the means of which they fondly hope at no distant day to acquire and possess. This is a sadly false and delusive use and estimation of the true sources and means of the long continued and highest enjoyment of the good things of this life ; even of those which are too often esteemed as its *summum bonum*, the gratifications of sense.

With his plain and wholesome fare and health giving habits, the active and temperate farmer or mechanic en-

joys more in the long run, even of the pleasures of sensual appetite, than does the fastidious and feasting epicure and gormand, with his complicated and surfeiting viands. Besides this, that a continued course of selfish sensual gratification is inevitably followed up and confirmed into a fixed habit, utterly fatal to those higher, safer, and ever increasing enjoyments which grow out of the exercise of the intellectual, moral, and imaginative powers of the mind, its benevolent affections, and its lively interest in the beauties and harmonies of nature and of art, in all their admirable and inspiring works.

Man was not created to yield everything to the suggestions of his present ease, or to the growing calls of his sensual cravings; much less to be ever engaged in pampering and inflating them by gratuitous and needless provocatives.—From the time when our first parents were placed in the garden, his duty and his permanent well being has required of him, that he should resist manfully the proffered temptation of the fair but treacherous fruit which is plucked and presented to him by the insidious hands of a thousand delusive charmers, “charming ever so wisely;” that he should maintain a constant and vigorous struggle, with the secretly armed adversaries “whose name is legion,” and who in many cheating forms are ever watching for his annoyance and destruction.

“Of comely form she was, and fair of face,
And underneath her eyelids sat a kind
Of witching sorcery, that nearer drew
Whoever with unguarded looks beheld.”

To these he must ever be ready to give battle with all his forces, and not flatter himself that he can safely repose upon his downy couch in a state of easy quietude, or pampered and enervating indulgence. And woe be to him, as it certainly will be, who mistakes this his irreversible and unwelcome destiny, and suffers himself to fall into the alluring lap of the Circean tempter who will soon bind him with her Philistine cords, when no Sampson’s arm wherewith to burst them shall be left to him. Even the healthful fruits of the delight-

ful gardens of the Hesperides may be over used to the loathing and disgust of their imprudent partakers ; let them beware then of indulging themselves too largely or too frequently in their refreshing bowers, and of lingering too long in their seductive retreats.

There are few more effective preachers than an academical or college catalogue, when its silent, but effective moral and practical teachings are seriously listened to by a contemplative observer, as he looks upon their *thick starred columns* after a few years' absence from his youthful classic retreats. How much the after usefulness, enjoyment, and respectability of future life, and even the long continuance of life itself in the ordinary course of providential dealings, depends upon the manner in which its early forming years may have been passed, will be made evident from the fact which such observation will indicate, that but a very few, comparatively, of those young men who, when pursuing their collegiate or academical course were distinguished for their idle, self-indulgent, and dissipated habits, will be found to have arrived in after life to a state of enviable reputation, or high distinction in any department of worldly honor or fame ; and a very large share of such will be found to have been quite short-lived, and to have passed early "*ad astra*" to a premature and inglorious grave. And any one who will make such examination of the fate of his classmates and cotemporaries in his academical life, will find, perhaps to his surprise, that such is the almost invariable result. So true is it in the proverbial language of the wise man of old, that, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." "Length of days is in her right hand ; and in her left hand riches and honor." While of the foward and perverse it is at the same time and with equal truth, affirmed, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead ;" and "Shame shall be the promotion of fools."

It was amidst the musing contemplations suggested by listening to *such a silent preacher*, that the following reflections were a short time since elicited.

LINES

On seeing a Catalogue of the Graduates of Yale College, after forty-eight years graduation there. Those deceased marked by stars.

"Sic itur ad astra."

As on my dim and fading sight,
These thick starr'd columns rise,
Sad thoughts my troubled heart o'erflow,
And tears my weeping eyes.

Fond memory now with vision strong,
Surveys those ancient walls,
Beneath whose calm and friendly shado,
We trod Yale's classic halls.

It tells, alas! of other years,
Of friends and follies past;
And ah! it tells of summer skies,
By wintry clouds o'ercast.

And still those ancient walls remain,
Those pleasant halls are there;
But oh! ye friends of other days,
Where have ye vanished—where?

This *star mark'd chronicle*, it speaks
How frail is life's fond dream;
How many gay and joyous hearts
Have sunk beneath its stream.

As ships upon the stormy main,
By wasting tempests driven,
Or by the winged lightning's shock,
The verdant oak is riven.

So launching on life's boisterous sea,
Youth leaves his peaceful shore,
Spreads all his canvass to the gale,
And parts to meet no more.

One sinks beneath the overwhelming wave,
In manhood's ardent prime;
Another floats through care-worn years,
Down the dark tide of time.

Oh! is there not some tranquil port,
Where storm-tossed barques shall ride,
Beyond the swelling of life's sea,
Above time's wasting tide?

Some calm retreat, *some classic ground*,
In heavenly verdure drest,
Where long lost friends shall meet again,
And weary wanderers rest?

It is impossible for the young, aspiring and glowing mind, with its bursting storhouse of full health, animal spirits, and fond anticipations, to realize the possibility of those changes of health, fortune, or condition, some of which inevitably await all whom "flesh is heir to;" at some period of their mortal existence, although indeed in quite unequal degrees. And yet an occasional contemplation of this aspect of human life may not be useless in checking those undue expectations, and chastening those riotous exultations of the inexperienced heart, to which all such are prone:—it may furnish too, an additional inducement to inquire for, and to avoid some of the shoals of life by which many of those changes may have been prematurely brought about, or greatly aggravated in their degree and intensity.

Now in life's bright and rising morning, and to the young, healthful, and unchastened heart, all is joy, serenity and peace in the present moment, and confident hope and expectation for the future one. But in its appointed season—

"A change comes o'er the spirit of its dream;"

a sad and sorrowing change!—the rough hand of time, age, disease or adversity, or all combined, perhaps is laid upon its confident and self satisfied possessor; he is driven, like the pampered monarch of old, from the busy scenes which once occupied him, and from the many enjoyments in which he once delighted to participate, to linger out a cheerless and unblessed existence, and to "eat grass like oxen." In this condition, no untried subject can at all realize, delineate or conceive the vivid and absorbing sensations, under the force of which the otherwise listless and unemployed mind *falls back as it were upon itself*, and forever calls up the shadows (now dark and sombre ones) of departed days, scenes and associations, which although once deeply interesting and delightful, had nearly vanished from the recollection, or lain dormant, amidst the active and absorbing scenes of life's varied occupations, recreations, or amusements. Now in his secluded retreats, how brightly and intensely, and yet how sadly, hover over and around him—

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“ Those rainbow dreams,
So innocent and fair, that withered age,
Ev’n at the grave cheer’d up his dusty eye ;
And passing all between, look’d fondly back
To see them once again ere he departed.”

And yet how little were those days, scenes, associations and opportunities realized, and their intrinsic charms and value estimated, as they were in possession or passing, compared with those new estimates of them, which are elicited when viewed through the magnifying, retrospective telescope of their passed and vanished shadows ; and for the lamented loss of which the stagnated and exhausted fountains of life can afford no substitute or compensation ; for most certain it is, that—

“ We cannot from *the dregs* of life receive,
That which its fresher runnings failed to give.”

Happy those who can fill this fearful vacuum by drawing refreshing waters from a deeper and more exhaustless fountain elsewhere ! The best partial preventative or palliative for most of these destined and some of them unavoidable afflictions of humanity, whether constitutional or acquired, will be found in self denying temperate habits of life, an active and engaged scene of employment of all the bodily and mental powers ; and an habitual interest, association and sympathy in the well being, the wants and enjoyments of our fellow men ; and never forgetting amongst all the appointed means and requisites for assured happiness here below, that

“ From purity of heart all pleasure springs,
And from a quiet conscience all our peace.”

But after all is done or attempted, we may adjust the parts, regulate the movements and oil the springs of this mysteriously complicated physical and spiritual machine as we may, the saddening view of its disjointed and decayed ruins, is a spectacle sure, near and fast approaching to all of them. And what a spectacle, indeed is that ! Look upon its earthly remains whilst yet left lingering here in its frail and perishing

tenement, upon its low and last couch, not much more unconscious perhaps of the joys and the beauties of the existence in and around it, than is the weary and worn burden, which it a little longer sustains. The once active, bounding, and elastic limbs, now torpid, stiff, and paralysed ; the intelligent, brilliant, and darting eye, sunk, glazed, and wandering ; the perception, once quick and penetrating, slow and obtuse ; the affections once ardent and glowing, cold and indifferent ; the imagination once revelling in a world redolent of life and beauty, plunging through a struggling morass of death, deformity and decay ; the aspirations once lofty and ennobling, crushed, degraded, and self abasing ; the senile tear and the deep-drawn groan fill up and finish the gasping and vanishing portrait ; and *there*, even *there*, upon that lorn and restless couch lies mayhap all that remains here of the hero, the statesman, the sage, the orator, or the minstrel. What a self humbling and abasing spectacle is that ! and how does its near contemplation sink into almost utter worthlessness, the most lofty capacities, the proudest attainments, and the widest domains of the most envied possessor of them all ?

And yet in the humble semblance of this dark and forlorn portrait must *all flesh*, with some slight variation of its distinguishing “lights and shades,” be at last sketched and presented to our averted and unwilling gaze ; and in this struggling and “parting strife” must each and every one, with somewhat greater or less degrees of prominence, act or bear his final part and character. Why or wherefore thus constituted and thus destined by a benevolent and all-wise architect,

“ We know not ; but we soon shall know
“ When life’s sore conflicts cease.”

And happy and fortunate, is he whom “wisdom’s great teacher” has not only instructed how to live usefully to his fellow beings, and happily to himself here in this transient vale of disappointment and of trouble,—

“ * * * * * But ah ! too high
For human knowledge, taught him how to die !”

POSTSCRIPT.

We omitted to notice in its proper place with the distinctness and prominence which it is entitled to, as evidence of the highly advancing and progressive state of our country for the last fifty years in the great cause of humanity and of social improvement, the contrasted state of the charitable and benevolent institutions and associations existing within it at these different periods. At the former one, no associations for the promotion of Temperance, or for moral improvement as such, existed, it is believed, through the whole extent of the land ; no Asylums for the insane, no retreats for the mute and the blind, no general hospitals for the infirm, reared by the hands of benevolence and charity, opened their hospitable doors for the relief and consolation of suffering humanity ; if we except perhaps the one at an early day erected by the hand, and dictated by the enlarged spirit of William Penn, and sustained by the active piety of his admirable and philanthropic Christian sect, the society of Friends. What these institutions and associations are now, and how diffusive in their effects upon human improvement, comfort and happiness it were superfluous to recount. The story is more emphatically told in the words of an intelligent and observing foreigner who has lately visited our country, and whose national feelings would certainly not prompt him in this or any other respect to do it more than justice at any rate. Says Mr. Dickens in his "Notes on America."

"Above all I sincerely believe that the public institutions and charities of this capital of Massachusetts, are as nearly perfect as the most considerate wisdom, benevolence and humanity can make them." The same credit, though in a less

perfect and lower degree may justly be awarded to most of the other states and portions of our country, whose territories are dotted over with these noble trophies of humanity and practical piety. We have no space or time to do more than to allude merely to the great advances we have made in the same time in ameliorating the sanguinary penal code of former times; the almost entire abrogation of capital punishment, soon it is hoped to be sought for only amongst the "lost things of the earth;" and the admirable systems of state prison discipline and employment which have taken the abhorred places of the "gallows and the whipping post," those nearly discarded relics of a barbarous and bloody age.

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